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organization, which leaves the permanent element that is striving to better the condition and raise the plane of the farmer's life. With these aims in view the farmers have arranged a course of study in farming economics and general subjects on the Chautauqua plan, hoping to become better acquainted with their own needs and the needs of their country.

Once started on the road of study we find that the outlook broadens and includes that all-round culture more easily obtained in the city than in the country, but just as valuable to the farmer's family as to their more favorably situated cousins. The isolation which has perhaps been the greatest hindrance to the farmer's growth is in a measure overcome. In their study of social and political topics in the local organization the members have the advantage which comes from numbers, the wider range of thought, the more varied experience.

The conventions also have their educational value, bringing together, as they do, men of varying grades of ability from different sections of the country, with different casts of thought and inherited tendencies, giving them the opportunity to discuss the questions of especial value to themselves from different points of view as well as in the light of their common interest. The capable men are recognized and intrusted with offices and duties, and the less fortunate are stimulated to effort.

Already we see the beneficial effects of this uprising in the animated interest taken by the press and the people in subjects formerly unheeded. The people of the cities are being made to see the wrongs and injustice suffered by the class upon whom they are dependent for wealth, prosperity, and even the very necessities of life. They are beginning to feel that a change must come in the management of the interests of the tillers of the soil, or farming will sink to so low a state as to be engaged in only by foreigners and the lowest class of the country, falling sooner or later to the condition of serfdom.

If we take a glance at the history of the great reforms we see that they have originated with the oppressed,—have emanated from below upward. Where have we in history an example of the class benefited by the then-existing state of things adopting broader views and more equitable measures? It is only when resistance becomes so strong as to threaten their interests that we find them listening to the appeals of the common people.

The permanence of the Alliance, the effect of this reform, must depend upon its ability to accomplish its two-fold purpose: First, to arouse a public interest in the condition of the farmer, and secure for him political recognition and financial fairness; second, to develop the farmer himself and incite him to intellectual exertion and efforts in the way of social culture, to lead him to a higher, broader, more beautiful life. We shall find that the results depend not so much upon legislation as upon enlightenment.

NEWTON L. BUNNELL.

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#### A TIME TO BE OUT OF DOORS.

I WONDER what most people think "out doors" was intended for any way? To be avoided, one would think, judging by the way they appear to shun it on every possible occasion. The business man comes down to his hurried breakfast, takes his carriage at the door or his street car or railway

car as near the door as he can possibly get it, hurries into his stuffy, half-lighted office, dashes out for thirty minutes at lunch time, packs himself into another air-tight receptacle for his homeward ride, eats his dinner, and sits and smokes in his parlor, or goes to a theatre and remains till a late hour in air which has forgotten the feeling of sunshine, and whose very touch would make the leaves of the forest shudder and droop. Is it any wonder that at thirty he is a prey to dyspepsia, and that neuralgia "marks him for her own," and silvers his hair even before his prime?

The business man's wife on the other hand is far too busily occupied with the household cares to think of stepping out of doors, even for a few minutes, until the middle of the afternoon, when, dressed, too often literally "within an inch of her life," in garments which render vigorous walking, or even breathing, utterly incompatible with comfort, she sallies forth per carriage or car to "make a few calls" or do some shopping, during either of which missions her main object seems to be to avoid the open air as much as possible; while her evenings are spent under her own roof in half-ventilated apartments, or in the overheated second-hand atmosphere of some drawing-room or theatre.

Their poor children, just in the very "cabbage-leaf" stage of their development, when every molecular change that takes place in their little bodies requires the assistance of fresh air and sunlight, are condemned to pass seven-eighths of their waking hours cooped up in schoolrooms or nurseries. They mustn't play in the streets, for fear of getting run over or having their morals corrupted by bad boys; their back-yards are so sooty and sunless that they scarcely care to spend any time in them, even if not forbidden to do so for fear of the disastrous effects upon white pinnares and clean frocks; so that the only out-door life the poor little things enjoy is a prim daily promenade with the nursemaid, or a short run in immaculate public or private parks where they may indeed be considered "of more value than many sparrows," but of vastly less importance than the geraniums-and the grass, and they are compelled to conduct themselves accordingly.

As for the children of the poor, their only playground is the gutter, and their only view of God's sunlight is through its reeking vapors, as a petition to Mayor Hewitt, of New York, impressed upon us with startling distinctness in its terribly significant statement that from the Battery to Tenth Street, comprising a population of hundreds of thousands, not a single park or public space is to be found where the children can play without danger of arrest by "one of the finest." Is it anything to be surprised at that this class of children are so sadly apt to grow up stunted and warped, morally and intellectually as well as physically? But it is unnecessary to multiply instances; the facts are all around us, even down to our small country towns. The merchant, the lawyer, the business man, all live as if their cardinal principle were to keep indoors just as large a proportion of their time as they possibly could.

How different all this is from what the Creator intended, and from what Nature demands if we will only listen to her. Did it ever strike you that, with all our self-conceit, we are physically only a higher order of vegetable, after all, and dependent upon the very same conditions for health and growth? The human flowers need just as much sunlight as any geranium or nasturtium, and we pine just as certainly if we don't get it; and yet in how many of our living-rooms will flowers flourish? Scarcely in one in ten, and then only in the windows which we generally relinquish to them to take a

back seat ourselves. With all my love for flowers I declare I can hardly regard them as better than vampires or cannibals when I see them crowding into the only sunny windows, greedily monopolizing all the fresh air and sunlight in the room while the human plants struggle along in the shade; or basking all day long in the sunlight in crystal-roofed and crystal-sided apartments, while the dear little human flowerets are cooped up in some brick-walled room upstairs, which at the best may have a few panes of glass looking to the south. Keep our flowers where we keep our children, and any florist can foretell the result. If we would just let our little ones occupy the bay-windows and conservatories, and keep our flowers back by the walls, we might not have as many bouquets, but we certainly would have healthier, rozier children, happier homes, and fewer "mysterious dispensations of Providence" to murmur at. Much might be done by abolishing those abominations, blinds, shutters, and closed windows, and giving the fresh air and sunlight of heaven free access to all our rooms,—but then the carpets and the furniture: "The sun will ruin them," says Mrs. Housekeeper. Well, for pity's sake, madam, if you must choose between colorless children and faded carpets, let the Brussels be sacrificed.

But this, after all, is only a mitigation of the severities of their imprisonment. We must learn more confidence in Nature, and trust ourselves and our little ones freely to her rough but kind embrace, without the enervating and often injurious protection of walls and roof. We must remember that houses are not to live in, but only to shelter in when from any cause we are shut out of our grand native mansion, the open air.

In this open air our life should be spent, and we are only justified in leaving it for shelter from the inclemencies of the weather or for protection against enemies. Nature demands an apology and a valid excuse for every hour spent indoors. I sometimes think we are making a mistake in building our houses so large and commodious and attractive, gilding the cage so gaudily that we almost make our little human birds prefer captivity to freedom. Houses should be comfortable but not so luxurious as to make us forget their real use and prefer them to out-of-doors. It is astonishing what filthy, dark, unventilated holes healthy savages can use with impunity for eating and sleeping-places so long as they regard them in the true light, and *LIVE* in the open air.

That the unwillingness of our Indian wards to exchange their airy tepees for practically air-tight, stove-heated boxes of logs or boards, is based upon a deeper instinct than mere savage custom, is abundantly proved by the frightful mortality which almost invariably attends this so-called "civilizing" process.

Their plan of a fire on the floor and a mere hole in the roof for a chimney, which absolutely necessitated the door being left open in order to keep up a draught, was not without its advantages. Even a modern "smoky chimney" is not an unmitigated evil.

We Anglo-Saxons ought, of all races, to be the last to fail to appreciate the value of fresh air and sunlight, for our striking characteristic is and always has been a passionate devotion to open-air life and sports. Indeed this passion may be not unfairly regarded as the mainspring of that indomitable physical and intellectual vigor which has made us the great pioneers and colony-builders of the world. Even apart from the invigorating effects of open-air exercise, I think we hardly sufficiently appreciate the value of direct sunshine. All life, so far as we can understand it, consists in

the conjuring up of the Great Sun-Spirit by those mighty wizards, chlorophyll and haemoglobin, the emerald and crimson "life-essences" of the vegetable and animal worlds respectively. A distinguished scientist has aptly and beautifully defined it as "organized sunlight." Of course we can and must obtain much of this literally vital element at second-hand, by combustion from "black diamonds" and hickory logs, or by digestion, from bread and beefsteak, but no organism can really flourish without obtaining a certain portion of its supply direct. "Basking in the sun" is in itself of real and considerable benefit, and it is no compliment to our human intelligence to find that cats and dogs understand that fact much better than we do. Even the "blue glass" craze had a truth underlying it, and owed such success as it achieved to the proportion of sunlight which penetrated its colored medium.

The love of sunshine is naturally one of our strongest instincts, and we should be far healthier and happier if we followed and developed it instead of practically ignoring and repressing it. How a sparkling, sunny morning exhilarates us and makes us feel that "it's too fine a day to spend indoors," and yet how few holidays are taken for that reason. The wealth of the sunbeams is poured out lavishly all around us, and we turn from it to struggle for a few pitiful handfuls of something else that is yellow and shining, but not half so likely to bring us happiness, and often has strange, red spots upon it. Give nature a chance, and we shall find that there is more than a mere fanciful connection between natural sunlight and that "sunny" disposition, which, after all, is the true "philosopher's stone."

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